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AUTHOR	Sklarz, David P.
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ABSTRACT

Administrators in the Marblehead Public Schools in Massachusetts were asked to rate 48 administrative skills in terms of their importance for administrators in the local district, the need for improvement in these skills among district administrators in general, and the need for improvement in the skills by the survey respondent in particular. Of 25 administrators, 17 completed the survey, and their responses were compared to those of 29 faculty members whose views of district administrator needs were also assessed using the same survey instrument. Respondents saw the greatest need for improvement in skills for developing program and staff evaluation criteria and for communicating effectively. The results of the survey indicate that some benefit may accrue from holding inservice workshops or similar activities on evaluating staff and programs, making decisions, working with groups, formulating position descriptions, developing communications channels, and managing conflict and crisis. The survey instrument and a compilation of the responses to it are appended. (Author/PGD)

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Needs Assessment

"Management Skills of Educational Administrators"

Marblehead Public Schools

Conducted by:

David P. Sklarz

EA 013 791

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Report on the Marblehead Administrators' Inservice Planning Survey, May, 1978

One component of the Marblehead management improvement program has as its stated objective "to develop management skills in the administrative and supervisory staff." The committee to which this task was assigned requested the New England Office of Educational Testing Service (ETS) to conduct a survey of faculty and administrators to identify the administrative skills that needed particular attention in Marblehead.

Survey Design

The design of this survey called for administrators to identify their own personal needs as well as the needs of their fellow administrators. The survey also asked faculty members to identify inservice needs for administrators. The sole purpose of this confidential, mailed survey was to collect group data on administrator inservice needs. While many important qualities of administrators (e.g., common sense, discretion, a sense of humor) are not likely to be affected by inservice education, the survey listed 48 skills which presumably could be usefully advanced by inservice activity. The list of skills was developed by ETS and reviewed by the Marblehead committee. The survey respondents were asked to rate each skill in terms of its importance for Marblehead administrators and in terms of the need for improvement in this skill among these administrators.

Seventeen out of twenty-five, or 68 percent of the administrators completed both survey forms, one rating the needs of Marblehead administrators in general and the other rating their own personal needs.

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Twenty-nine or 58 percent of a random sample of 50 faculty members responded to the survey in which they described their perceptions of administrator needs. (For a copy of the survey form, see Attachment A).

Survey Results.

The survey was designed to make possible the classification of each skill in one of the following categories:

I High Importance - High Need for Improvement
II Some Importance - High Need for Improvement
III High Importance - Some Need for Improvement
IV Some Importance - Some Need for Improvement

Skills in the first category would clearly deserve careful attention in any inservice planning. Skills in the second category would merit attention if time and resources permit or if other evidence clearly supported the need to give attention to these skills.

Because the skills included in the survey were those usually considered important for administrators, the comparatively high rating given most items on the importance scale was anticipated. The respondents, however, did discriminate between items in rating their importance. For example, the ability "to research and prepare a well organized presentation on a current issue in education" was assigned a comparatively low importance rating both by the faculty (2.7) and the administrators (3.1). A "high importance" rating would be 4.5 or above.

Table 1 reports the skills that both faculty and administrators cited as very important and needing "more than some" improvement. The rating scale ranged from 5-"urgent need" to 1-"no need," with 3-"some need" as the middle position. For each skill, Table 1 presents the average need for

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improvement rating from the three sets of responses. For purposes of this report, skills rated as "very important" (5) by two-thirds of the respondents are described as high in importance; those rated "urgent need" (5) or between "urgent" and "some need" (4) by a majority of respondents are described as high in need for improvement.

Table 1: Administrative Skills Rated High in Importance and Need for Improvement By Marblehead Staff and Administrators, May, 1978

		Need for Improvement-Average Rating*		
Item No.	Skill (Abbreviated)	Staff	Admin.	Admin./Self
77	Develop criteria for program eval.	4.3*	3.7	3.9
75	Develop criteria for staff evaluation	4.2	4.5	4.4
7	Formulate decision criteria	3.9	3.6	3.5
63	Feedback to staff/ constructive	3.5	3.9	3.7
87	Contrib.to school discipline	3.4	3.5	3.2
55	Understand staff sensitivities	3.4	3.5	2.9
45	Estab. & maintain effec. comm. channels	3.3	3.2	3.3

* on a scale of 5 (Urgent Need) to 1 (No Need)

As shown in Table 1, the two skills rated the highest in need for improvement were the skill "to cooperatively develop clear and realistic criteria for the evaluation of programs" (#77) and the ability "to cooperatively develop clear and realistic criteria for the evaluation of professional staff" (#75). The high rating assigned to a related skill - the ability

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"to appraise and provide feedback to individual staff in a constructive manner" (#63) further underscored the perceived need for improvement in staff evaluation. Two other communication skills were also singled out - the ability "to evidence understanding of the particular sensitivities of the staff" (#55) and the ability "to establish and maintain effective channels of communication" (#45). In the area of planning and decision-making, one of the steps in the decision making process - "to formulate clear decision criteria" (#7), was noted as in need of improvement by the faculty and the administrators. Interestingly enough, all three items which used the word "criteria" received high need for improvement ratings. The ability "to contribute positively to school discipline"(#87) was rated as urgently needed by a number of faculty, while others rated it comparatively low in need. There were clearly two different sets of perceptions on the need for improvement in this skill.

Other skills were rated as high in both importance and in need for improvement by either the faculty or the administrators. In their self ratings, the administrators singled out the ability to "define steps in implementing a decision or plan" (#15) and to "organize a clear and interesting presentation to a group." In their general ratings of administrator needs, they selected as needing improvement the ability "to provide for the effective use of time"(#21), to "plan and conduct effective meetings" (#39), to "formulate clear position/job descriptions describing the responsibilities of a given position"(#25), to "evidence understanding of parents and members of the local community in terms of their values and viewpoints"(#93), to "establish rapport and interact

effectively with small groups" (#61), and to "identify decisions to be made" (#3). The faculty selected as needing improvement the ability "to effectively contribute to the resolution of conflict situations (#57), "to apply decision rules and make decisions," "to identify needs, problems or opportunities," (#1), and "to provide needed support to individual staff at critical times" (#65).

In the second category, high need for improvement and some importance, the administrators selected the ability "to effectively articulate the mission of the school system and the role of specific programs"(#83), "to provide necessary information on financial constraints and school priorities (#73), "to identify the appropriate persons to be involved in a given decision" (#5), and "to relate change to clearly identified needs" (#23). The faculty placed only one item in this category - the ability "to evidence an understanding of what motivates various people" (#71).

A complete listing of the ratings given each item is included in Attachment B.

Summary Conclusion

Any final reading of these survey data must be left to Marblehead administrators who are able to relate these findings to other information on local needs. Several inservice workshops or other activities, however, which are suggested by this survey, include the following:

- Staff evaluation
- Program evaluation
- Decision-making
- Working with groups
- Formulation of position descriptions and communications channels
- Conflict/crisis management

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Marblehead Administrator Needs Assessment Survey

This survey is being conducted solely for the purposes of providing information needed for the planning of administrator inservice training. While many important qualities of administrators (e.g., a sense of humor, common sense, discretion, etc.) are not likely to be affected by inservice education, many aspects of administration can be improved by such education. This is a confidential survey. You are asked to return your answer sheet directly to the ETS New England Office via the enclosed envelope without filling in your name. Answer sheets for this survey are precoded for purposes of analysis (1 - administrator self-report or 2 - administrator survey or 3 - faculty survey).

You are asked to give your views on the importance of certain skills or abilities for educational administrators in Marblehead and the need for improvement on each skill among the Marblehead administrative staff - especially those with whom you interact most frequently. The administrative staff includes principals, assistant principals, department heads, and system-level staff. Please rate each skill or ability listed in terms of importance and the need for improvement using the following scale.

For Odd Number Items:

Importance of Skill or Ability for Marblehead Administrators

A	B	C	D	E
Very Important		Important to Some Extent		Not Important At All

For Even Number Items:

Need for Improvement in this Skill or Ability among Marblehead Administrators

A	B	C	D	E
Urgent Need		Some Need		No Need

Please mark your ratings on the enclosed answer sheet IN PENCIL. Please note that the items are numbered across the page (not down the column). PLEASE DO NOT FOLD THE ANSWER SHEET.

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A	B	C	D	E
Very Impt				Not Impt
Urgent Need				No Need

Planning and Decision Making: the skill or ability to...

1/2	identify needs, problems or opportunities	1	Importance?
		2	Improvement Needed?
3/4	identify decisions to be made	3	Importance?
		4	Improvement Needed?
5/6	identify the appropriate persons to be involved in a given decision	5	Importance?
		6	Improvement Needed?
7/8	formulate clear decision criteria	7	Importance?
		8	Improvement Needed?
9/10	gather information on decision alternatives	9	Importance?
		10	Improvement Needed?
11/12	organize long and short range planning efforts	11	Importance?
		12	Improvement Needed?
13/14	apply decisions rules and make decisions	13	Importance?
		14	Improvement Needed?

Implementation: the skill or ability to...

15/16	define steps in implementing a decision or plan	15	Importance?
		16	Improvement Needed?
17/18	assign responsibilities and set schedules	17	Importance?
		18	Improvement Needed?
19/20	provide for materials and support services in implementing plans or programs	19	Importance?
		20	Improvement Needed?
21/22	provide for the effective use of time	21	Importance?
		22	Improvement Needed?
23/24	relate change to clearly identified needs	23	Importance?
		24	Improvement Needed?
25/26	formulate clear position/job descriptions describing the responsibilities of a given position	25	Importance?
		26	Improvement Needed?
27/28	relate decisions to school committee policies and school system procedures	27	Importance?
		28	Improvement Needed?
29/30	obtain input from appropriate staff in budgeting	29	Importance?
		30	Improvement Needed?
31/32	prepare and effectively present budget needs	31	Importance?
		32	Improvement Needed?
33/34	manage budgeted funds effectively	33	Importance?
		34	Improvement Needed?

Communication: the skill or ability to...

35/36	organize a clear and interesting presentation to a group	35	Importance?
		36	Improvement Needed?
37/38	speak effectively to large and small groups	37	Importance?
		38	Improvement Needed?
39/40	plan and conduct effective meetings	39	Importance?
		40	Improvement Needed?

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A	B	C	D	E
Very Impt Urgent Need				Not Impt No Need

Communication: (cont'd)

41/42	select the appropriate medium of communication in a given instance	41 42	Importance? Improvement Needed?
43/44	write clearly and concisely	43 44	Importance? Improvement Needed?
45/46	establish and maintain effective channels of communication	45 46	Importance? Improvement Needed?
47/48	use AV and illustrative materials effectively in making presentations	47 48	Importance? Improvement Needed?
49/50	lead group discussions effectively	49 50	Importance? Improvement Needed?
51/52	question effectively in order to clarify an issue	51 52	Importance? Improvement Needed?
53/54	listen effectively in individual and group discussions	53 54	Importance? Improvement Needed?
55/56	evidence understanding of the particular sensitivities of the staff	55 56	Importance? Improvement Needed?
57/58	effectively contribute to the resolution of conflict situations	57 58	Importance? Improvement Needed?
59/60	establish rapport and interact effectively in meetings with individuals	59 60	Importance? Improvement Needed?
61/62	establish rapport and interact effectively with small groups	61 62	Importance? Improvement Needed?

Supervision and Support: the skill or ability to...

63/64	appraise and provide feedback to individual staff in a constructive manner	63 64	Importance? Improvement Needed?
65/66	provide needed support to individual staff at critical times	65 66	Importance? Improvement Needed?
67/68	set up reasonable reporting procedures	67 68	Importance? Improvement Needed?
69/70	effectively delegate responsibilities to appropriate subordinates	69 70	Importance? Improvement Needed?
71/72	evidence an understanding of what motivates various people	71 72	Importance? Improvement Needed?
73/74	provide necessary information on financial constraints and school priorities	73 74	Importance? Improvement Needed?

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A	B	C	D	E
Very Impt / Urgent Need				Not Impt / No Need

Evaluation: the skill or ability to...

75/76	cooperatively develop clear and realistic criteria for the evaluation of professional staff	75 76	Importance? Improvement Needed?
77/78	cooperatively develop clear and realistic criteria for the evaluation of programs	77 78	Importance? Improvement Needed?
79/80	monitor a range of programs in terms of process and outcome indicators	79 80	Importance? Improvement Needed?
81/82	collect, analyze, and use effectively test and other evaluation data	81 82	Importance? Improvement Needed?

Education: the skill or ability to...

83/84	effectively articulate the mission of the school system and the role of specific programs	83 84	Importance? Improvement Needed?
85/86	evidence an understanding of basic educational concepts and current issues in education	85 86	Importance? Improvement Needed?
87/88	contribute positively to school discipline	87 88	Importance? Improvement Needed?
89/90	evidence a personal philosophy of education based on study and reflection	89 90	Importance? Improvement Needed?
91/92	evidence understanding of the students in terms of their values and viewpoints	91 92	Importance? Improvement Needed
93/94	evidence understanding of parents and members of the local community in terms of their values and viewpoints	93 94	Importance? Improvement Needed?
95/96	research and prepare a well organized presentation on a current issue in education	95 96	Importance? Improvement Needed?

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		Faculty		Admin.		Admin./Self	
		Impt.	Need Imp.	Impt.	Need Imp.	Impt.	Need Impt.
Planning and Decision Making: the skill or ability to...							
1/2	identify needs, problems or opportunities	4.9	3.4	4.6	3.0	4.7	2.6
3/4	identify decisions to be made	4.8	3.2	4.6	3.4	4.7	3.1
5/6	identify the appropriate persons to be involved in a given decision	4.5	3.1	4.3	3.2	4.6	2.9
7/8	formulate clear decision criteria	4.7	3.6	4.4	2.4	4.6	3.4
9/10	gather information on decision alternatives	4.5	3.0	4.4	4.4	4.2	2.4
1/12	organize long and short range planning efforts	4.4	3.3	4.2	3.4	4.8	3.5
3/14	apply decisions rules and make decision	4.5	3.5	4.6	3.4	4.4	3.2
Implementation: the skill or ability to...							
5/16	define steps in implementing a decision or plan	4.4	3.2	4.2	3.4	4.5	3.6
7/18	assign responsibilities and set schedules	4.7	2.8	4.5	3.0	4.7	2.7
9/20	provide for materials and support services in implementing plans or programs	4.6	2.9	3.9	3.0	4.5	3.1
1/22	provide for the effective use of time	4.3	3.0	4.5	3.8	3.9	3.2
3/24	relate change to clearly identified needs	4.4	3.3	4.0	3.2	4.4	3.1
5/26	formulate clear position/job descriptions describing the responsibilities of a given position	4.6	3.2	4.5	3.5	4.2	3.4

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		Faculty		Admin.		Admin./Self	
	Implementation (Cont'd)	Impt.	Need Imp.	Impt.	Need Imp.	Impt.	Need Impt.
27/28	relate decisions to school committee policies and school system procedures	3.6	2.7	4.1	3.2	4.4	3.1
29/30	obtain input from appropriate staff in budgeting	4.4	2.6	4.5	1.8	4.6	3.5
31/32	prepare and effectively present budget needs	4.8	2.5	4.5	2.7	4.5	2.7
33/34	manage budgeted funds effectively	4.6	2.3	4.5	2.3	4.6	2.4
	Communication: the skill or ability to...						
35/36	organize a clear and interesting presentation to a group	4.2	3.0	4.2	3.5	4.6	3.6
37/38	speak effectively to large and small groups	4.1	3.0	4.0	3.0	4.6	3.1
39/40	plan and conduct effective meetings	4.5	2.5	4.6	3.5	4.7	3.1
41/42	select the appropriate medium of communication in a given instance	3.8	2.4	3.7	2.8	4.1	2.8
43/44	write clearly and concisely	4.3	2.9	4.4	3.5	4.7	2.9
45/46	establish and maintain effective channels of communication	4.9	3.3	4.5	3.5	4.8	3.4
47/48	use AV and illustrative materials effectively in making presentations	3.1	3.9	3.5	2.9	3.7	3.0
49/50	lead group discussions effectively	4.1	2.0	4.2	3.3	4.5	3.1
51/52	question effectively in order to clarify an issue	4.4	2.9	4.2	3.0	4.3	3.2
53/54	listen effectively in individual and group discussions	4.8	3.3	4.2	3.1	4.0	2.8
55/56	evidence understanding of the particular sensitivities of the staff	4.7	3.4	4.5	3.5	4.6	3.0

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		Faculty		Admin.		Admin./Self	
	Communication (Cont'd)	Impt.	Need Imp.	Impt.	Need Imp.	Impt.	Need Impt.
57/58	effectively contribute to the resolution of conflict situations	4.8	3.5	4.5	3.4	4.6	3.0
59/60	establish rapport and interact effectively in meetings with individuals	4.8	3.0	4.2	3.4	4.8	3.0
61/62	establish rapport and interact effectively with small groups	4.6	3.1	4.3	3.4	4.5	2.9
	Supervision and Support: the skill or ability to...						
63/64	appraise and provide feedback to individual staff in a constructive manner	4.9	3.5	4.8	3.8	4.7	3.7
65/66	provide needed support to individual staff at critical times	4.9	3.3	4.8	4.2	4.7	2.9
67/68	set up reasonable reporting procedures	4.2	2.8	4.6	2.7	3.9	3.4
69/70	effectively delegate responsibilities to appropriate subordinates	4.4	3.1	4.2	3.6	4.5	3.1
71/72	evidence an understanding of what motivates various people	4.0	3.5	4.2	3.1	4.6	2.8
73/74	provide necessary information on financial constraints and school priorities	4.1	2.6	4.1	3.5	4.2	3.1
	Evaluation: the skill or ability to...						
75/76	cooperatively develop clear and realistic criteria for the evaluation of professional staff	4.8	4.2	4.8	4.5	4.8	4.4
77/78	cooperatively develop clear and realistic criteria for the evaluation of programs	5.0	4.1	4.6	4.9	4.7	3.9

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		Faculty		Admin.		Admin./Self	
	Evaluation: (Cont'd)	Impt.	Need Imp.	Impt.	Need Imp.	Impt.	Need Impt.
79/80	monitor a range of programs in terms of process and outcome indicators	3.5	3.0	3.9	3.1	4.1	3.4
81/82	collect, analyze, and use effectively test and other evaluation data	4.0	3.2	3.7	3.3	4.1	3.4
	Education: the skill or ability to...						
83/84	effectively articulate the mission of the school system and the role of specific programs	4.2	2.8	4.3	3.7	4.4	3.2
85/86	evidence an understanding of basic educational concepts and current issues in education	4.6	3.1	4.4	2.9	4.3	2.3
87/88	contribute positively to school discipline	4.7	3.4	4.7	3.5	4.6	3.6
89/90	evidence a personal philosophy of education based on study and reflection	4.3	2.9	4.0	2.5	4.1	2.4
91/92	evidence understanding of the students in terms of their values and viewpoints	4.5	2.9	4.4	3.0	4.4	2.8
93/94	evidence understanding of parents and members of the local community in terms of their values and viewpoints	4.2	2.8	4.5	3.5	4.5	3.6
95/96	research and prepare a well organized presentation on a current issue in education	2.9	2.3	3.1	2.5	3.6	2.2

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